

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 AID-05 /071 W

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P R 050851Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6448

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 1519

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT ID

SUBJ: GOI ARRESTS MOCHTAR LUBIS; RELEASES THREE

JANUARY 15 DETAINEES

REF: JAKARTA 8090 DTD JULY 2, 1974 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: GOI AUTHORITIES ARRESTED PROMINENT EDITOR
AND LIBERTARIAN MOCHTAR LUBIS FEB 4 ON SUSPECION OF
SUBVERSION, APPARENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH JAN 15, 1974
JAKARTA RIOTS. DETENTION OF LUBIS IS SURPRISING, AS
HE REPORTEDLY BELIEVED HE HAD CLEARED HIMSELF OF
SUSPICION AFTER INTERROGATION IN LATE 1974 WHICH HE
HAS REQUESTED. IT IS DOUBLY SURPRISING IN VIEW OF
HIS FAME IN INDONESIA AND ABROAD AS NATIONALIST HERO
AND CHAMPION OF FREEDOM WHO SUFFERED NINE YEARS IN
PRISON UNDER SUKARNO. IF PROLONGED, DETENTION WILL
DOUBTLESS AROUSE NEW CRITICISM OF GOI IN US AND ELSE-
WHERE. EMBASSY HAS ALSO LEARNED THAT AUTHORITIES RECENTLY
RELEASEDTHREE MORE JANUARY 15 DETAINEES, BRINGING TOTAL
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OF THOSE RELEASED TO AT LEAST NINE. END SUMMARY

1. ACCORDING EMBASSY CONTACTS WHO SPOKE TO LUBIS' FAMILY, LUBIS WAS ARRESTED TUESDAY FEB 4 AT 8:30 AT HIS HOME AFTER RETURNING FROM TENNIS AND WAS TAKEN TO DETENTION PLACE NEAR LUBANG BUAYA IN JAKARTA SUBURBS. DETENTION ORDER WAS SIGNED BY ATTORNEY GENERAL ALI SAID, AND AUTHORITIES SEARCHED LUBIS' HOME AND OFFICES OF HIS FORMER NEWSPAPER, INDONESIA RAYA, WHICH WAS BANNED AFTER JAN 15 1974 JAKARTA RIOTS.

2. THE 52 YEAR OLD LUBIS BECAME FAMOUS AS OPPONENT OF SUKARNO AND CHAMPION OF PRESS FREEDOM IN 1950'S. IN 1957 HE WAS JAILED BY SUKARNO FOR INDONESIA RAYA'S ANTI-GOVERNMENT EDITORIALS AND PAPER WAS CLOSED. WITH COMING OF SUHARTO GOVERNMENT, LUBIS WAS RELEASED IN 1966 AND INDONESIA RAYA RESUMED PUBLICATION. HOWEVER, LUBIS CONTINUED HIS MUCKRAKING, GADFLY ROLE, AND IN RECENT YEARS INDONESIA RAYA EDITORIALS WERE INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF CORRUPTION AND OTHER ABUSES IN SUHARTO GOVERNMENT. A POLITICAL LONER, HE HAS NOT BEEN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH ANY FACTION. LUBIS, WHO IS ALSO NOVELIST, SHARED MAGSAYSAY AWARD IN 1958 FOR HIS WORK ON BEHALF OF FREE PRESS AND IN 1973 WAS ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF PRESS FOUNDATION OF ASIA. IN RECENT YEARS HE HAS BEEN OCCASIONAL COLUMNIST FOR NEWSWEEK, AND HAS TRAVELED WIDELY ABROAD. IN 1973 HE WAS A FELLOW AT ASPEN INSTITUTE FOR HUMANISTIC STUDIES.

3. SEVERAL MONTHS FOLLOWING CLOSURE OF INDONESIAN RAYA IN FEBRUARY 1974 AUTHORITIES DETAINED ITS DEPUTY EDITOR, BAHU'UDDIN; BUT RELEASED HIM IN DECEMBER, WITHOUT RERGE. LUBIS, LIKE SOEDJATMOKO, WAS DENIED RIGHT TO TRAVEL ABROAD AFTER JANUARY AFFAIR, OSTENSIBLY, ACCORDING TO GOI, BECAUSE HE WAS NEEDED TO ASSIST IN INVESTIGATIONS.

4. FORMER AMB TO US SOEDJATMOKO TOLD POLCOUNS FEB 5

THAT AUTHORITIES SPENT THREE WEEKS INTERROGATING LUBIS AT THE LATTER'S OWN REQUEST FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF QUESTIONING OF SOEDJATMOKO IN LATE 1974. LUBIS BELIEVED CONFIDENTIAL

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HE HAD EXONERATED HIMSELF FROM SUSPECTED INVOLVEMENT IN JANUARY AFFAIR, AND SOEDJATMOKO WAS THEREFORE DOUBLY SURPRISED WHEN HE HEARS LUBIS HAD BEEN ARRESTED. HE SPECULATED THAT GOVERNMENT MAY NEVERTHELESS TRY TO BRAND LUBIS AS "BIG FISH" BEHIND JAN 15 "PLOT" WHICH IT HAS BEEN SEEKING, THUS FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS.

5. SOEDJATMOKO ALSO SAID AUTHORITIES HAVE RELEASED

THREE MORE DETAINEES WHO WAS ARRESTED AFTER JANUARY AFFAIR, INCLUDING FAHMI IDRIS, 1966 STUDENT LEADER AND FORMER HEAD JAKARTA CHAPTER ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (HMI), AND IMAM WALUYO, 1966 YOUTH ACTIVIST, EDITOR OF FEMINA MAGAZINE AND ONE TIME PROPONENT OF INDEPENDENT FOURTH POLITICAL PARTY. THIS BRINGS TO AT LEAST NINE THE NUMBER OF LONG TERM JAN 15 DETAINEES WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN RELEASED.

6. COMMENT: ARREST AND DETENTION OF LUBIS IS SURPRISING IN VIEW OF HIS REPUTATION IN INDONESIA AS NATIONALIST, ANTI SUKARNOIST MARTYR, HIS PROMINENCE ABROAD IN PRESS AND INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES, AND THE OVER ONE YEAR WHICH HAS ELAPSED SINCE THE TANAKA RIOTS. (AS TIME PASSED WE HAD THOUGH THREAT CONTAINED REFTEL WOULD NOT MATERIALIZE). IF HIS DETENTION IS PROLONGED, IT IS BOUND TO INTENSIFY CRITICISM IN US AND ELSEWHERE ABROAD OF GOI REPRESSION AND PROVOKE UNFLATTERING PARALLEL BETWEEN NEW AND OLD ORDERS. GOI WILLINGNESS TO RISK SUCH CRITICISM SUGGESTS GROWING INDIFFERENCE TO DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN OPINION OVER CIVIL LIBERTIES ISSUES AND

CONTINUED PROOCCUPATION WITH MAINTAINING TIGHT INTERNAL SECURITY AND QUIESCENT BODY POLITIC. NEWSOM

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